

ombudsman" and of viewing "free flow" not as an object but as interaction and exchange. (250-252) Minority rights should be strengthened; closed user groups should be "discouraged." (262, 265) Local information provision and "discursive education" should be encouraged. (272-3) Further policies cover anti-trust legislation, software development, centralization, networking and public inquiries.

Dr. Finlay's strategy of concentrating on what people say about new technology displaces a discussion of the technology itself. Her lack of awareness of many developments will lead her to be discounted by many people working in the field. Added to this is the permeation of technical, philosophical terms throughout the book. Finlay has already anticipated an "almost total incomprehension on the part of most empiricist students of mainstream communication." (330) We could add that many students will also have great difficulty following her argument. Is this not ironic in view of Dr. Finlay's attempt to launch a True Revolution where plain folk can talk plainly to each other?

Reviewed by: Christopher Podmore  
University of Ottawa

***Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory***

**Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck**  
New York: Praeger, 1988, 139 pp.

This slim volume hits hard at one major point: public relations practitioners need to abandon their dominant attitude of narrowly serving the needs of their clients and instead attempt to engender a broad-based sense of community. By approaching public relations from this broader perspective both the needs of the client and the community are served. Implicit in this theory is that a closer-knit community will retain more traditional family-based values and therefore comprise a more stable and appreciative economic unit for one's client.

This "idealistic" theory of public relations and client-market role relationships in modern-day mass society is offered without counter arguments. Also, empirical tests of this theory are not presented. A case-study of Sugar Creek, a Missouri company-town built in 1904 as the base for a Standard Oil (Indiana) (now Amoco Company) refinery, is used to illustrate the way a "sense of community" can be affected by corporate public relations.

Although it is not all that evident how Standard Oil purposely and successfully engineered this "sense of community" in Sugar Creek, the telling of the case is interesting. By the 14th and final chapter, the authors delineate a helpful list of ways public relations practitioners can accomplish the goal of "community". At this point, the case study community is used as an example for each of the eight ways.

For example, the authors suggest that public relations practitioners can help: (1) illuminate common interests of various community groups, how they become contentious issues and how they may be solved; (2) individuals in the community to overcome alienation; (3) their organizations assume the role of creating a sense of community (normally a role reserved for public schools); and (4) encourage leisure-time activities of citizens to enhance their sense of community.

The fertile thinking of scholars at the University of Chicago throughout the first half of this century—Dewey, Burgess, Cooley, Park, and Mead—forms the basis for this public relations-community relations theory. The authors present an excellent discussion of PR history, social history, Chicago School concepts, and how they all blend together into a coherent line of reasoning.

The reader is left to connect "the theory" to modern-day PR behaviour. One is left wondering if the theoretic client-market relationship would ever work to the client's benefit. Also, what would happen in only one or a few practitioners adopted this PR stance? Likewise, can Sugar Creek be accepted as a valid case-study of this theoretic phenomenon?

While not aspiring to be an intro PR text, this book could be assigned as a thought-provoking reader at any level of study.

It will challenge some of the generally-accepted explicit and implicit principles of public relations. It would also be useful as a method of generating research ideas which could effectively test PR-community theory. Attempts at restructuring and/or extending this theory could be assignment material for PR courses.

This attempt at broadening the perspective of public relations practitioners to include more traditional values, altruistic goals, and a greater sense of community are highly commendable. What began as a Ph.D. dissertation by the major author may continue on to be a living, breathing, and growing body of thought that will enhance the PR profession and all of our lives. It now exists as a neophyte theory with which our students should be encouraged to confront.

This text may even be more relevant to Canadian scholars than to those in the United States. Since Canadian PR education is now developing and less administratively entrenched, our courses may be more open to including this text as course material. More importantly, Canadian society is amenable to a more humanistic and less rigidly materialistic approach to business practices than those in the United States however much these cross-national differences seem to be disappearing.

Reviewed by: Stuart Surlin  
University of Windsor